

VZCZCXRO0634

PP RUEHLH RUEHPW

DE RUEHIL #0724/01 0961446

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 061446Z APR 09

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2160

INFO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3904

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9207

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0086

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0019

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4708

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 1408

RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 7023

RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 5951

RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RHMFISS/USCOMCENT MACDILL AFB FL

RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000724

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2019

TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV CA PK

SUBJECT: BLUF RELEASES AMCIT JOHN SOLECKI

REF: ISLAMABAD 584

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: On April 4, the Balochistan Liberation United Front (BLUF) released Amcit United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) provincial head John Solecki outside of Quetta. Solecki, who had been kidnapped on February 2, was transported by US military aircraft to Bagram Air Force Hospital in Afghanistan and then onto Landstuhl Military Hospital in Germany. He is being accompanied by FBI personnel back to the United States. Though Solecki suffers from several health problems, he was in stable health when released. The kidnappers claimed the release was granted on humanitarian grounds, however, Solecki himself said that the captors had "got tired of dealing with him." BLUF is a previously unknown group of Baloch nationalists who were inexperienced kidnappers. The release is a result of both GOP pressure on Baloch leaders, including Khair Bux Marri, and BLUF's fear that Solecki would die in their captivity. Solecki will be flown back to New York on April 7 to be reunited with his family. Post released a press statement on April 5 thanking the GOP for its assistance in effecting Solecki's release. End Summary.

¶12. (C) On Saturday, April 4 Balochistan Liberation United Front (BLUF) made a call to a Quetta news agency announcing that they had released Amcit UNHCR provincial head John Solecki. BLUF announced that the United Nations (UN) could come and pick him up. Solecki was found 30 miles south of Quetta in Mastung district by local police. Pakistani police and Balochistan Chief Minister Raisani along with UN officials drove Solecki to the Combined Military Hospital in Quetta. The Pakistani police were respectful and professional overall. There were no pictures of Solecki released to the press and he was taken to the hospital immediately, according to the previously agreed upon reception plan.

¶13. (C) Mr. Solecki was dehydrated but in overall good health. After spending a short night in the hospital, Solecki was met by Embassy FBI, RSO, and UN personnel who escorted him by US military aircraft to Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan. After medical evaluation, Solecki was flown from Bagram to Landstuhl Military Hospital in Germany on April 6. Solecki will fly to the United States on April 7 to be reunited with his family in New York.

¶4. (C) In their call to the news agency, BLUF claimed their release of Solecki was on humanitarian grounds. In a press conference on April 4, Interior Minister Rehman Malik cited the work of the GOP in negotiating with Baloch tribal leaders, especially Nawab Khair Bux Marri. Malik also cited the work of the special committee made up of Baloch representatives and GOP leaders to discuss the issue of missing persons being part of the solution. Though John Solecki refused to say anything while still in Pakistan, in Bagram he told accompanying FBI agents that he believed there were three reasons for his release. First, Solecki said he had played up the fact that he was sick and that he would die, a situation that BLUF wanted to avoid. Also, Solecki believed that Nawab Marri did have some influence over the BLUF and the ultimate release. Lastly, Solecki said that the BLUF was just getting tired of having to deal with him. The BLUF treated him fairly well and they were not seasoned kidnappers. According to Solecki, the BLUF told him they "had more important work to do."

¶5. (C) The UN, USG, and GOP had previously agreed upon a reception plan that helped to facilitate the smooth transport and exit of John Solecki. The various representatives of the UN and USG were able to work together to send out a reception team as soon as Solecki's release was confirmed. Additionally, regular coordination with the GOP allowed the UN and USG teams to minimize delays and miscommunication. The UN and the FBI will hold separate reviews and evaluations of the process.

ISLAMABAD 00000724 002 OF 002

¶6. (C) Comment: The safe release of Amcit John Solecki is a relief for USG, UN, and GOP officials. We were initially skeptical that the kidnapping was, indeed, the work of Baloch nationalists since hostage-taking had not previously been part of their modus operandi. While this initial foray into the kidnapping business may not have yielded much in the way of ransom, it did yield a rich trove of sympathetic attention to the Baloch cause and at least passing GOP commitment to redress of Baloch grievances. Regrettably, in the absence of continued efforts to improve conditions in Balochistan, this may be sufficient to encourage further Baloch kidnapping in the future. End comment.

PATTERSON